

### 3-3. 根の国訪問 “Visiting Ne-no-kata-su-kuni” (3)

O-namuji seized this opportunity. He took the great deity's hair and tied it to the rafters of the hall and blocked the hall's doorway with a gigantic rock. Carrying his wife, Suseri-bime, on his back, and carrying the great deity's vigorous sword, his vigorous bow and arrows, and his heavenly dividing harp<sup>1</sup>, he started to get away. But just at that moment the harp knocked a tree and the earth rumbled. The sound surprised the sleeping great deity and woke him up. He got up and pulled down the hall. While he was unfastening his hair tied to the rafters, they got away. The great deity pursued them, and when he came up to Yomo-tsu-hira-saka<sup>2</sup>, he stopped and looked far in the distance. Calling O-namuji's name, he said, “Wield the vigorous sword<sup>3</sup> and the vigorous bow and arrows which you took away from me and hunt your brothers right down to the bottom of the slope, or drive them into the river's currents. From now on call yourself O-kuni-nushi-no-kami or Utsushi-kuni-tama-no-kami, and take my daughter, Suseri-bime, for your wedded wife and build a big palace at the foot of Mt. Uka<sup>4</sup>, where you should live together in peace and comfort, you wretch<sup>5</sup>.” So O-kuni-nushi-no-kami hunted his brothers right down to the bottom of the slope and drove them into the river's currents, and then began to build the province of Izumo.

#### Notes | 注釈

##### #1 heavenly dividing harp:

Harpes have the power to summon souls and were indispensable for rulers. Surely O-kuni-nushi has a desire to be a ruler in some region.

##### #2 Yomo-tsu-hira-saka:

We should recall that Yomo-tsu-hira-saka is the entrance /exit of the underworld. We can imagine that Ne-no-kata-su-kuni is located in almost the same place as the underworld. For both worlds share the same entrance/exit.

##### #3 “Wield the vigorous sword . . . you wretch”:

This is a memorable speech. Susano-o realized that O-kuni-nushi, who went through terrible ordeals, was just perfect for his daughter's husband and he decided to give her away. It is like the scene at the departure gate at the airport where the bride's father sees off his daughter, grudgingly but finally making up his mind to let her go.

##### #4 Mt. Uka:

Mt. Uka should refer to Mt. Misen or Mt. Yakumo near Izumo Taisha. The bridge in front of the big torii (shrine gateway) of Izumo Taisha is called Uka bridge. There must have been an area or a place called Uka in the Taisha area.

##### #5 “you wretch”:

This address may sound rude, but it is the expression of Susano-o's deep affection toward O-kuni-nushi.